

## Message Text

PAGE 01 NATO 02325 212043Z  
ACTION EUR-12

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CONFIDENTIAL USNATO 2325

FOR EUR/RPM;INR/DDR/RSE;EUR/SOV

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PFOR, NATO, XH  
SUBJECT: NATO EXPERTS REPORT ON TRENDS IN THE SOVIET UNION AND EASTERN EUROPE

REF: USNATO A-192

1. WE HAVE SENT BY REFAIR THE TEXT OF THE NATO EXPERTS REPORT ON TRENDS IN THE SOVIET UNION AND EASTERN EUROPE, WHICH THE NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL WILL CONSIDER ON MAY 4. OUR SUGGESTED TALKING POINTS FOLLOW BELOW. THE DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO CONSIDER ADDING FURTHER SUBSTANTIVE TALKING POINTS ON SUCH ISSUES AS SOVIET RELATIONS WITH THE NEW GOVERNMENT IN INDIA.

2. ACTION REQUESTED: COMMENT ON THE SUGGESTED TALKING POINTS AND THE EXPERTS REPORT BY COB MAY 3, 1977.

3. BEGIN TEXT OF SUGGESTED TALKING POINTS:

-- THE REPORT IS A GOOD REVIEW OF RECENT  
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DEVELOPMENTS IN AN AREA OF CRITICAL IMPORTANCE TO THE ALLIANCE, AND IS A USEFUL CONTRIBUTION TO OUR CONTINUING SEARCH FOR A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE DECISION-MAKING IN EASTERN EUROPE AND THE SOVIET UNION.

-- THE EXPERTS MET TOO SOON AFTER THE ELECTIONS IN INDIA TO ALLOW ANY DEEP ANALYSIS OF THE EFFECT OF THOSE ELECTIONS ON SOVIET RELATIONS WITH

INDIA, BUT UNDOUBTEDLY WILL TREAT THAT ASPECT OF SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY WHEN THEY MEET IN THE FALL.

-- ON THE WHOLE, THE REPORT SEEMS CAUTIOUS. IT EMPHASIZES THE WEAKNESSES OF THE SOVIET SYSTEM -- ITS AGING LEADERSHIP, ITS LACK OF DYNAMISM, AND ITS INEFFICIENT BUREAUCRATIC AND ECONOMIC SYSTEM -- WITHOUT MENTIONING SOVIET STRENGTHS, OR ASSESSING THE EFFECT OF SOVIET WEAKNESSES ON THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE USSR'S POLICIES AND CAPABILITIES. FOR EXAMPLE: FIRST, THE REPORT NOTES THAT THE SOVIETS ARE IN A POOR POSITION GLOBALLY -- EXCEPT IN AFRICA -- BUT DOES NOT GENERALIZE ABOUT THE RESULTING EFFECTS ON SOVIET POLICY CONSIDERATIONS. SECOND, THE REPORT DOES NOT SEE ANY BRIGHT SPOTS IN THE SOVIET ECONOMY -- EXCEPT THE RECORD 1976 HARVEST -- AND MENTIONS THAT THE POOR PERFORMANCE IN THE ECONOMIC SECTOR WILL HAVE TO BE OF GROWING IMPORTANCE TO SOVIET POLICY; YET THE EXPERTS APPARENTLY SHIED AWAY FROM EXPLORING THE POSSIBLE EFFECT OF THE USSR'S ECONOMIC WEAKNESS ON SOVIET INTEREST IN DETENTE AND ARMS CONTROL.PEREZ

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## Message Attributes

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